THE VOICE OF THE SPEAKER

That book is good
Which puts me in a working mood.
Unless to Thought is added Will,
Apollo is an imbecile.

—R. W. Emerson

THE VOICE
OF
THE SPEAKER

by

RALPH C. SMEDLEY

Founder of Toastmasters International

Author of The Amateur Chairman — Speech Evaluation

The Man Behind the Rules

Published by

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The Need Is Universal

What this country really needs is an epidemic of better voices. (When we say "this country" we mean any country in which this book is read, for improvement in voice is a world-wide need.)

Harsh, unfriendly unpleasant, tight, nasal, squeaky scolding rasping mumbling voices abound. Really good ones are a rarity

Yes, your voice could be better

Not only the orator needs a better voice. Every person who speaks shares the need. Whether you speak from the pulpit or the platform, from behind the counter or from a seat at the breakfast table, you can make the world a more pleasant place for human occupancy if you will learn to use your best voice in the best way

This book presents a simple, practical, easy to-use plan for voice improvement. Quite intentionally the material has been presented in condensed form, for use by the busy person. It is nontechnical in language and in presentation, so that almost anyone can use it without recourse to a dictionary

The plans and exercises offered have been tried out in years of experimentation and use. They will bring results.

How much will you get out of it?

That all depends on you

Give it three to five minutes at a time, three times a day for six weeks, and you will feel the difference. Keep on for six weeks more, and your associates will note the difference too Keep it up for a year and you will have good voice habits firmly fixed.

*It is worth trying at least.

And voice habits are important. Most of us use our voices almost constantly during our waking hours Even talking in the sleep is not uncommon. Our habitual tones, inflections accents are tremendously important, for they go far in helping other people to size us up

Observe what emphasis has been put upon voice by keen writers and talkers, ancient and modern. It was CHARLES LAMB who wrote

> *How often the spell of beauty is broken by coarse loud talking! How often you are irresistibly drawn to a plain unassuming woman whose soft, silvery tones render her positively attractive! In the social circle how pleasant it is to hear a woman talk in that low key which always characterizes the true lady! In the sanctuary of the home how such a voice soothes the fretful child and cheers the weary husband!*

And CHARLES DICKENS, describing Mr Bounderby the loud-speaking successful man pictured in *Hard Times* completes his picture with these words about the Bounderby voice

Maybe you have heard a Mr Bounderby talk.

> *A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty; a man who was the bully of humility*

In contrast are the words of HENRY GILES

> *Never is the deep, strong voice of man, or the low sweet voice of woman, finer than in the earnest but mellow tones of familiar speech, richer than the richest music, which are a delight while they are heard, which linger still upon the ear in softened echoes, and which, when they have ceased, come long, far back to memory like the murmurs of a distant hymn.*

Who wouldn t like to have such a voice as that, or one even remotely resembling the ideal? And there have been such voices. We have the testimony of HOMER who wrote

> *H ceased, but left so pleasing on the ear*
> *His voice that listening still they seemed to hear*

On the other hand, THORNE SMITH has described the voice of one of his unpleasant characters thus

Oh Oh The man said slapped.

> *One of those voices which, had it been face one could have instinctively slapped.*

You, as a talker may have your choice of either kind of voice. If you want to have the

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CHAPTER ONE

You And Your Voice

A man may succeed with a strident voice, but he could have done it better and more easily with a pleasant one.

—Hamlin Garland

So you want to have a good speaking voice?

You can have it, provided your "want" is strong enough. Wishing for a better voice will help you to have a better voice, because the wishing will remind you that there is room for improvement, and it will make you keep on trying.

Effective speech requires good voice.

It should require no argument to convince you that you cannot hope to produce the most effective results in speech unless you know how to use your voice. You should readily realize that a good, controlled voice is an asset in every contact with others.

Every normal person has the materials for a good voice. All he needs to do is to use his natural endowments.

The chances are a thousand to one that your vocal apparatus is all right, and that with proper use, it will give you pleasing results. It depends on two items.

First, for voice improvement, *you must have a plan*, a method.

sort of voice which wins favorable attention by its clarity its resonance, its friendly qual ity you can do so but it takes effort. The other voice the one which makes people wish that they could slap it, comes without con scious endeavor on your part.

It's up to you, after all.

We may put it this way as a generalization If you choose to have a good voice and work to that end your voice will be good. If you make no conscious choice, or if you let your choice die with merely wishing you will have a poorer voice than you are entitled to and you may even have one which is offensive and repulsive

The quality of your voice, in a word, depends on you.

If you are not willing to make the effort to follow the directions, you may just as well not go on in this course. It will do you no good merely to read these pages. Benefits will come only if you first *read* and then *act*.

No miracles are promised.

Please understand that there is no promise that a "perfect" or a "finished" voice will be the result of following the plan outlined in this course. You can be assured that systematic study and practice of the exercises will result in distinct improvement of the voice, but mi raculous, overnight perfection must not be ex pected. It takes time to overcome bad habits which have existed for years, and to develop new techniques to the point of operating without conscious effort. You will have achieved results when good voice production has become habitual with you.

At the beginning limit your voice practice period as to time. Find several five-minute intervals throughout the day when you can give attention to the exercises. Still better concentrate every day on some special item which can be included in every sentence you speak in ordinary conversation.

Take it easy at the start.

Take the exercises softly especially at first. Do not risk any muscular forcing, nor any straining of the vocal mechanism. Make the training an enjoyable process, stimulating and inspiring

Second, *you must have a determination* which will make you work the plan, and keep on working it until you develop the kind of voice which will make it a pleasure to hear you talk.

It is not enough that you understand the vocal organs and how to use them. They must be trained by exercise and use so that their action is automatic, unconscious, spontaneous, in producing your best voice.

** Adopt a plan follow it.*

You must be patient and persistent. You must follow the exercises outlined for your training devoting time to them *every day*. You must watch your speech constantly, directing your voice to do as you tell it, until the action becomes so habitual that it occurs without volition.

THE METHOD IS NOT DIFFICULT

Fortunately the exercises necessary to produce a good speaking voice are simple and easily performed, requiring very little special equipment. Many of these exercises can be used while sitting at your desk, walking about at your work, or even while lying in bed.

** You can exercise sitting down.*

Most of the voice exercises are good for your well-being conducive to good health, and even stimulating to your mind. These by products are your extra dividends which doubly repay you for your efforts.

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DEVELOP "SPEECH CONSCIOUSNESS"

"What a pleasant voice!" someone says. Is he talking about your voice?

Become speech conscious so that you will watch yourself and at the same time observe carefully the speech habits of others. Listen for pleasant voices and study them

"The voice is a natural reporter of the mind and body"

Just as the impression which a speaker makes upon his audience is conditioned on his ability to put into pleasing vocal form that which he wishes to say so his impression upon customers employer employee, business associate or neighbor depends to a large extent on the tone and inflection of his voice.

It is not enough for your voice to be able to utter the words. The idea is gained from the sound. Daily experience will prove to you that the meaning of conversation is gathered from the tone of voice quite as much as from the words spoken The same words or combinations of words may be spoken with different inflec tions to reflect totally different meanings. The properly used voice gives the speaker an ad vantage whenever he speaks.

MAKE A RECORDING

Put your voice on record.

Right at the start, make a recording of your voice You may have a recorder in your home or a Sound Scriber or a Dictaphone at the of fice. Use it to record a short speech given in your natural way of speaking Save the record

for future reference. Even if you have to pay someone to make the recording, it is worth doing. You should know how your voice sounds. Then you will know what it needs.

Listen to yourself. Others hear you.

Even though you cannot conveniently make a voice recording, you may get a fairly good idea of how you sound by listening to your own voice. Place your hands just in front of your ears, with fingers extended, but held close together. Let the hands form a definite barrier —wings, if you please—in front of the ears. Now proceed to talk in your ordinary tone. This will give you a better conception of the sound of your voice. Instead of your hands, use large sheets of cardboard, perhaps a foot square. This will give a still better voice picture. It will help you to start at once to correct some faults.

"Your voice is either an outlet for, or a barrier to your thoughts."

YOUR VOICE AND YOUR HEALTH

The work will be good for you. But only if you work.

To the practiced ear the voice is an index to the bodily condition of the speaker. Only when the body is healthy is the voice in really good condition. When the human structure deteriorates, the quality of the voice reflects the weakness.

Everyone understands that when one catches cold, voice trouble results. But not so generally is it understood that extreme fatigue, worry

nervousness, stomach disorders and almost all human ailments have similar effects.

* Here's a big word—nasopharynx. You have one in your head

When one encounters a poor tone or a flat, dead speaking voice it is a common indication of some obstruction in the nasopharynx or sinus cavities. (The nasopharynx is the upper part of the pharynx, continuous with the nasal passages The sinus cavities are the various cavi ties in the cranial structure which contain air and which are if in good condition in com munication with the nostrils)

Adenoids out of order palate not as it should be, teeth in need of attention any sort of nasal obstruction or disorder can make the voice worse instead of better

But aside from these local conditions the general condition of bodily and mental health definitely affects the voice. That is why space is devoted in later chapters of this book to exercises intended to build up the body Muscular and mental relaxation are helpful The strengthening of the muscles involved in deep breathing contributes to better circulation bet ter posture, better digestion and assimilation of food.

Thus, the practice of right breathing should help the general health and in turn the better the general health condition, the more favor able are the prospects for good voice production

CHAPTER TWO

The Friendly Voice

There is no index of character so sure as the voice.

—TANCRED

A primary requirement for a good voice is the quality of friendliness.

Too many voices are set on a harsh, scolding, unfriendly note. Such a voice repels, even when the speaker wishes to attract. (Could your voice be one of that kind? Listen to yourself, and find out.)

Voice habits can be controlled

The friendly quality of the voice is very largely a matter of habit. So is the unfriendly one. It reflects a state of mind — a spiritual quality. To develop friendliness requires mental control and discipline. To produce the genial, cheerful, gracious tone in which you would like to speak may require a drastic working over of your way of thinking and your attitude toward people and things in general.

If you have fallen into the habit of scolding, snarling, unpleasant speech, you will have to make a definite effort to break the habit and to substitute the new one of speaking smoothly, pleasantly, attractively.

THE METHOD

First cultivate the habit of thinking in a friendly way about people.

There are some whom you dislike perhaps with good cause. When you think of them your instinctive mental attitude is, 'I don t like that person" or it may be How I hate that fellow!

** E F Howe said: "Instead of loving your enemies, treat your friends a little better"*

If you speak to someone toward whom you have that feeling you are almost certain to speak unpleasantly But *if you think the hate ful thought* about him while talking to someone else, you may snarl at your best friend.

It is better to get rid of the unfriendly thought, even toward the one who has wronged you. Don t let him spoil the quality of your voice.

Second when you speak to anyone make it a point to put the friendly note into what you say Cultivate "the voice with a smile.

This does not mean that you are to approach everyone with a grin on your face or with silly trivial, or even witty words. You can be as serious as the occasion demands, but in every speech, however weighty and serious it may be, you can hold the attitude of good will excluding the hateful, antagonistic, fault finding irri table undercurrents which introduce the nega tive qualities into your thinking and speaking

** You can be serious without being cross.*

TRY THIS

Speak aloud the words "What are you doing here?"

You can make these words indicate

Well, what are you doing here?

1. extreme annoyance as when you find the small boy playing on your newly planted lawn
2. interest, as when you meet an old friend in a strange place
3. pleasure and gratification, as when you discover an unexpected visitor in the audience which you are to address.

You can express many shades of meaning just by the tone you use in speaking these five words.

The chances are that you will get on better even with the trespassing small boy if you keep the snarl out of your voice.

Observe your dog when you speak to him. He can interpret your mood by your tone, whether he understands the words or not. When you say to him, "Come here!" he may come with head and tail drooping reluctant to approach you, or he may come bounding and full of enthusiasm, glad to see you because your voice has a welcoming tone.

Don't snarl.

Even your small son or daughter—wife or husband—may be sensitive as the dog is to your mood, reflected in your voice.

GOOD SALESMANSHIP

One of the first rules of salesmanship is "win your prospect. You can t do this by in sulting him, or scolding him, or showing that you think him a fool.

The same rule holds for the speaker

Get these simple principles into your mind

** The speaker is a salesman.*

1 Try to win favor through a friendly approach.
2. Practice the spirit of friendliness every day
3. Think friendly thoughts about people, even those you dislike.
4. Every time you start to speak, remind yourself of the friendly approach which wins good will.
5 Suppress the tendency to scold or find fault unpleasantly
6 Put a friendly thought, a cheerful word a note of commendation into every speech
7 A friendly suggestion usually brings better results than a harsh dictatorial order even when you speak to one in subordinate position. If you speak to someone in a tone which suggests that he is "dirt under your feet," don t be surprised if he "does you dirt."

CHAPTER THREE

The Relaxed Voice

The point is not that good voices are rare, but that few voices are used correctly, and being used incorrectly they appear to be poor or even very bad voices.

—R. E. PATTISON KLINE

Relaxation is good for people in these days of stress and strain.

Alternate rest and labor long endure.
—*Ovid*

For the sake of your general health, you need to take time occasionally during the day to relax both in muscles and in mind. The sanitariums and hospitals are crowded with people who never learned to relax.

Take a rubber band, for example, or a steel spring. Put it under tension. Stretch it, and leave it for a long period of time, always strained, never relaxed. Come back to it after months and observe that it has deteriorated, not from the strain put upon it, but because it was never permitted to let go.

That same rubber band, if kept in a use which causes it to be stretched and relaxed at frequent intervals, will last for years as good, live rubber.

The tires on your automobile will serve far longer in daily use than if left in storage. The daily pounding of the pavement gives the rubber the needed exercise, the alternating strain

and relaxation which will prolong its life. Take a lesson from the rubber Learn to relax after tension

Tightness of the vocal organs is responsible for much unpleasant tone quality You must loosen up

Your voice your face, your whole being will be helped by relaxation It is the alternating tension and release which stimulates circula tion, builds muscular tissue, and induces ease and flexibility

THE PROBLEM

* *Don t strangle your voice.*

Many people talk "in the throat." The chances are that you do this unless you have had instruction in use of the voice By talking "in the throat," we mean holding the tones too far back. The throat and jaw muscles are tense. The result is a harsh, squeezed voice. You can t produce a fine resonant, pleasing tone when your throat muscles are pinched, tense, strained.

Tight muscles, plus lack of proper breath support (which is discussed in the next study) will give thin tones, nasal, high pitched lack ing in resonance and generally disagreeable.

The tightness of the throat may be the result of nervousness in the case of the public speak er In ordinary conversation, it is a result of ignorance or carelessness, of misunderstanding

how to use the voice, or disregard of the importance of using the voice well.

Study your own case to discover whether your poor voice quality is caused by nervousness, ignorance, or carelessness. Then you know where to start.

THE SOLUTION

Relaxation goes with correct breathing

It is difficult to decide which should be taken up first. Relaxation is so important an element that we give it priority advising you to keep these suggestions in mind for use when we come to the chapter on breathing

As with friendliness, tenseness is largely a state of mind. You must learn to think of relaxation, easing of tensions, even while you practice the exercise to induce it.

It's mostly in your mind.

HOW TO RELAX YOUR MUSCLES

Before concentrating on the easing of the vocal apparatus, try a general bodily relaxation. It will be good for you.

Many physicians are obtaining beneficial results for their patients by teaching them how to relax. You can follow this prescription with assurance that it will at least do you no harm.

If you lack experience in relaxation, start with an easy one.

Sit down in a chair and let your arms hang down loosely Try to remove every suggestion of control or movement. Let every muscle, down to the tips of the fingers, go completely loose. "Devitalized is the word for it. You may find even this simple exercise hard to perform, but you can do it.

When you have accomplished devitalization of the arms, let the upper part of your body slump By conscious effort, remove every muscular control.

Having held the relaxed position for half a minute or more, snap back into control tense the muscles vitalize the sinews.

Repeat this alternate relaxation and tensing several times. Stimulating isn t it?

Now lie down on the floor or on some other firm surface. Lie flat on your back with arms down at the sides.

** Forget your dignity These exercises will make you feel good all ver*

Start the relaxing process with your toes and feet. Try to devitalize these muscles just as you did those in your hands and arms. Then move up to the legs. This is not easy You will need to try it many times.

Then go to work on the torso Get the shoulders and arms loosened up Let your head roll loosely Remove, so far as you can every conscious muscular movement. Just breathe

You will need a good deal of practice on this. Do not be discouraged if the muscles tighten up in spite of you. Just keep on trying. Get at least a part of them to relax at the same time. Bring as many as possible into easement at once. Even if your relaxation is induced only in sections of the body it will help.

HOW TO RELAX YOUR VOICE APPARATUS

Either standing or sitting comfortably place your hands lightly on your throat muscles while speaking as usual. Note the tenseness of the muscles — unless you have already learned relaxation. Observe the muscles of the jaw. Pretty tight, are they?

You need not put your hand before your mouth this time. Get all the good you can from big wide yawns.

Now yawn expansively. Open the mouth wide. Never mind your manners—take a big yawn and finish it with an easy "Ho-hum!" Prolong that "hum-m-m. Drop the jaw as far as it will go without stress. Waggle the jaw from side to side. Keep on humming, with lips closed and jaw loose.

Repeat the yawning and the humming. Note how the throat muscles become loosened and relaxed. See how comfortable your throat feels, with the strain removed.

Retaining the ease and looseness induced by the yawn, speak a number of words which involve the open vowels and the liquid consonants. Use such words as *hang harm lane*

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Even if you can't hum a tune, you can say "hum-m-m" and get the desired effect. If you can sing enough to hum a simple tune, so much the better

Practice humming at every opportunity Every time you hum, make sure that the muscles of throat and jaw are at ease.

Use some or all of these exercises every day taking a few minutes at a time, several times a day After a few weeks, you will see the difference. So will your friends. Your voice will take on new resonance and color

REHEARSAL CHART

Exercise frequently but not too long at one time. Be careful about over straining.

1. Relax arms and upper part of the body
2. Relax entire body lying down, if possible.
3. Practice yawning, finishing with a hum-m.
4. Speak words, such as: *home hang harm, lane lone loom, main.* Emphasize the "h" and "l" sounds, and prolong the final consonant.
5. Yawn, and repeat *nah, nay nee no, noo.* Sing them on one tone.
6. Hum, without the preliminary yawn. Hum a tune, if you can. Keep throat and jaw muscles relaxed.

(Not more than five minutes at a time on these exercises.)

maim lone loom Open the mouth wide, dropping the jaw loosely Exaggerate lip and jaw movements. Prolong the final consonant with humming When the throat becomes tired, stop and yawn again

Knead the throat muscles with the fingers, to make sure that there is no tightness there.

All this may sound like a rather strenuous exercise. *It may bother you at first, but keep* at it several times every day three minutes at a time, and *softly* and you will soon find it enjoyable, restful, easy to perform.

Now you are ready for another step As you take it, remember that relaxation is the thing you must keep always in mind

Repeat in a loud, wide-open monotone the syllables *nah nay nee no noo* Sing these on a single tone, if you can sing Drop the jaw Relax the throat. Prolong the sound of each syllable Don t simply say "nah nay nee-no-noo Take your time. Say "na-a-a-a-ah," and give equal length to each syllable. If you speak these syllables properly you will find new volume and resonance in your tones.

* *Put some authority into your tone. Your voice is bigger than you think.*

Now try the humming without the prelim inary yawn Close the lips loosely and drop the jaw as far as it will go without opening the lips, and without stress. Then hum A good way is to say "hum m m m m" prolong ing the sound as much as you can

CHAPTER FOUR

Controlled Breathing (A)

Hardly one person in a thousand ever tries to improve his voice. Yet, it is about the best and easiest way to increase your influence over other people.

—ALBERT EDWARD WIGGAM

You must breathe in order to live!

How do you breathe? Study yourself and find out. Unless you have had voice lessons, or good athletic training, the chances are that your breathing is shallow misdirected, and lacking in control.

Correct breathing is the foundation of good voice, and it is one of the fundamentals of general good health. You must not neglect it.

Dr Johnson notes: "To preserve health is a moral and religious duty for health is the basis of all social virtues.

Because so many adults breathe incorrectly so many voices are unsatisfactory If you want your own voice to be as good as it can be, *learn how to breathe*

BREATHE NATURALLY

Natural breathing is correct breathing

When you were a baby you breathed naturally As you grew up, you forgot how Clothing, posture, and other externals interfered. Bad habits developed so that you must now learn all over again.

AN EXPERIMENT

If you are inclined to question the importance of voice, make a test for yourself

If you want to dominate the conversation, try this. It does not always work, but keep on trying

When you are in a group of loud-speaking noisy talkers, suppose someone enters whose voice is soft, well modulated, clear Suppose this person enters into the conversation, speaking well-chosen words in a voice which is easily heard, not because of its volume and force, but because of its quality and the sense of poise and authority which always accom panies good speech

As a rule, others stop their noise to listen to the good voice. Because they cannot hear without listening and because what they hear is worth hearing they listen even though the speaker does not raise his voice above ordinary conversational pitch.

If you want to be heard and appreciated by intelligent people use your best voice in the best way to speak words that deserve a hear ing

You may be the one who can command atten tion in the midst of a noisy group It will give you a new sense of power when others become quiet in order to hear you This is the way to test yourself

Set it down as a basic principle that a good voice well used and controlled is a mark of the cultured person.

In order to prevent misunderstanding let us clear up a few facts about breathing in general, so that you may not be misled.

There are three methods or types of breathing, each of them good in its place, or rather all of them good when used together. If you permit yourself to employ any one independently of the others, your breathing is imperfect and incomplete.

The three methods of breathing are: clavicular, abdominal, and costal. They are named by the bodily regions which they affect.

You must breathe to live but you live better if you breathe right.

Clavicular or "collarbone" breathing is shallow, affecting the upper part of the chest. Abdominal breathing implies special emphasis on the action of the lower muscles of the body. Because this is fundamental to satisfactory use of the other two, we shall proceed to give the extra emphasis to it in the instructions which follow.

The costal method of breathing is very important because, through the expansion of the ribs, there is produced the greatest lung capacity for inflation and, while the ribs are expanding, the diaphragm descends and the clavicles are slightly raised. At the same time the abdominal muscles are brought into play, an effect which is lacking *in the shallow* respiration of the clavicular method.

By proper development of diaphragmatic

Probably you are a shallow breather — a collarbone breather " If so it is because you unconsciously changed from the deep breathing of babyhood to the bad habits which now beset you So far as breathing is concerned, you should now return to infancy

Watch the baby as he lies asleep flat on his back. Observe how his abdominal muscles come into play as he breathes If he starts crying you get an extra exhibition of deep breathing

** Man, a dunce uncouth, Errs in age and youth: Babies know the truth. —Swinburne*

No doubt there was a time when your breathing was like that—deep satisfying automatic. But do not be discouraged You can train yourself to a new and more intelligent habit of deep breathing

If you haven t a baby at hand watch the family dog or cat, lying asleep before the fire See how completely the entire body is relaxed It would be a good thing for you to learn the animal s secret of relaxation

But note especially how the animal breathes. The abdominal muscles work at every breath. The muscular movement is almost all below the ribs.

You should try to breathe like a dog!

BREATHE COMPLETELY

Much will be said on these pages about deep breathing

fill up with air but put your attention on the abdominal muscles.) Inhale to full capacity and then exhale as thoroughly as possible. Then try counting as you inhale, and again as you exhale. Begin by counting four slowly as you inhale, and four as you exhale. Raise the count to six, and then to eight. This will give you a fair idea of what normal, controlled, correct breathing should be.

Count as you breathe. Induce rhythmic breathing.

Second

Stand erect, with back flat against the wall. Set your heels against the baseboard, and touch the wall with every part of the body that can be reached without straining. Now inhale deeply using the same abdominal muscles which were brought into action when you were lying on the floor. Do not raise the chest any more than is caused by the posture. Inhale and exhale, making those lower muscles strain your belt at every inhalation.

Third

Now stand away from the wall, body erect, chin depressed, hands loosely at the sides, and inhale and exhale again, keeping up the same action as when lying down, or when standing against the wall. This is the way you should breathe naturally and normally when the habit becomes fixed.

Fourth

Hunt up a large book, or other convenient

action, in the abdominal breathing the habit of deep and thorough breathing is formed, and on this as a foundation the costal breathing habit follows as a natural consequence Your primary task, for the sake of your health as well as of your voice, is to form the habit of deep breathing so that no conscious thought is required to maintain it.

TO GET THE IDEA

** Experience is a good teacher Try these things for yourself and you will begin to understand them*

Learning to breathe without a teacher merely by reading about it, is a process which presents some difficulties. The first thing for you to do is to try to get an understanding of just what is involved. For this, it is necessary that you relax let go of ordinary conventionalities, and learn how it feels to breathe right. Once you have done this, you will enter upon the series of exercises intended to develop correct breathing as a habit.

First

** This should be easy unless it's a hardwood floor*

Lie flat on your back, on a firm surface The floor is best, but a bed with a hard mattress will answer the purpose

As you lie there, relaxed and at ease, inhale deeply Observe that the abdomen is lifted as the diaphragm functions. Inhale and exhale several times to establish this motion Keep the chest quiet. Locate all motion below your belt. (Of course your chest will swell as you

The great muscle which is directly responsible is the diaphragm.

It will pay you to develop and strengthen this great muscle.

Without getting into technicalities, let us say that the diaphragm is a large and powerful muscle which separates the thorax (upper cavity of the body) from the lower (abdominal) portion. When at rest, the diaphragm resembles an inverted basin. It is attached to the inner walls of the body at about the level of the lower ribs. When it contracts, or flattens out, as in the act of inhaling, air is drawn into the lungs, and the muscles of the lower part of the torso are expanded and hardened.

This is why we speak of "pressure on the belt," and of exercising the abdominal muscles. Bear in mind that the term "abdominal breathing" is used simply for convenience or as a means for centering the reader's attention. While we know that all proper breathing is controlled by the diaphragm, we realize that action of the muscles of the abdominal region is created when the diaphragm works freely It is easier for many students to think in terms of these visible and tangible muscles, and to estimate the quality of the breathing by the strain on the belt than by physiological exactness of phraseology

You need not go deeply into the study of the mechanics of breathing unless you wish to do so. It is enough to know that when you are

A new use for your old dictionary

object with a weight of 10 pounds or so. An unabridged dictionary is about right. Lie down on your back again, and place this book on yourself, locating it just below the ribs. Balance the weight, and then lift it by inhaling This gives you the sense of resistance to be worked against as you inhale and exhale, lifting and lowering the weight.

Begin cautiously with this task. Don t let it tire you. The muscles must get used to it before you can carry it on for long

These four experiments in posture have introduced you to what may be a new conception of deep breathing and how to acquire it. These are included in the 'Rehearsal Chart" at the end of this chapter It will be necessary for you to spend much time with them — a little at each time — to train your muscles to function unconsciously It is that unconscious functioning in the right manner which constitutes the habit of correct breathing so essential to good voice production.

FURTHER MUSCULAR TRAINING

An important part of the process of developing breath control is the strengthening of the muscles which are concerned in breathing

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You need not go deeply into the study of the mechanics of breathing unless you wish to do so. It is enough to know that when you are

breathing right, using "deep" breathing or controlled breathing your middle section is much involved and the muscles below the ribs are kept very active.

We proceed now with four postures or exercises which are designed to tone up the diaphragm and other muscles so as to lay the foundation for your habit of unconscious, instinctive deep breathing

* *These exercises will pay you dividends on the time you spend on them.*

First

Lie flat on your back, as before. Now open your mouth and pant like a dog You can't really 'pant" without inducing vigorous action of the diaphragm. Entertain yourself by watching the rise and fall of the abdominal muscles as you pant.

Second

Stand up with back against the wall and repeat the panting exercise. With chin depressed so as to touch the chest, pant as though you had just finished a long run Pant slowly then fast. Don t let your chest have much of a part in the breathing

Third

Down on your back again, repeat the panting Then without inhaling repeat the muscular movement just as in the actual panting It may be difficult at first, but keep on trying and soon you will get the action established.

Then stand up and repeat the exercise with your back against the wall.

Fourth

Even if you are not a prize fighter this will help you.

Standing or lying down, as may be convenient, try hardening the abdominal muscles without the use of breath. Tense the muscles. Then begin tapping, first with the fingertips, then with the palms of the hands, and finally with clenched fists. Be very gentle at first, but gradually increase the force.

After a considerable time, perhaps several weeks, the muscles of the abdomen will become so well toned up, so firm, that you can strike yourself amidships with full force without the slightest inconvenience.

This practice is recommended as an aid to better breathing by increasing the muscular strength where it is needed. In addition, it is good for the general health. Whatever tones up those big muscles of the intercostal and abdominal regions contributes to better health as well as to better breathing.

EXTRA DIVIDENDS

If you are in earnest about making a thorough work of it, you may wish to include some other body-building exercises. Especially if you have a tendency to develop too much girth around the middle, you will gain by following the next series.

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Notes:

In all these exercises, keep your mind on the deep breathing.

Do not carry any exercise to the point of exhaustion. Be moderate, but persistent. A short period of exercise, frequently repeated, is far better than infrequent long ones.

Don't get an overdose.

THE RIB-LIFTER

Here is one more exercise, or rather a posture, which may help to give you a better idea of how deep controlled breathing works. It is not offered as an exercise for frequent use, but is suggested as a posture to be assumed occasionally to help you "get the feeling." It gives you the full effect of "costal" breathing, mentioned on page 31.

Just like an umbrella.

Stand comfortably erect. Bend the elbows slightly just enough to get them away from your body. Draw in your abdomen, and expand your lower ribs — all this without inhaling. Try to think of your rib structure as the frame of an umbrella which you are starting to raise.

Now inhale deeply, first stretching the lower muscles, as though you were drawing the breath clear down into your stomach, and then filling the upper spaces, so that the chest is fully expanded.

This will make you feel big, strong, satisfied with the lung-filling air you have taken in. It

* *Collect the dividends on your training.*

Strengthening of the muscular structures, which should result from these exercises, helps to keep you from expanding in the wrong places. Girth control is a by product of breath control.

First

Lie on your back, with arms loosely folded. Now lift your head and shoulders from the floor Don t strain. Don t try to sit up. Just lift the head a few inches, bringing the shoul ders up at the same time, and then relax, as the head goes back to the floor Up and down, up and down, until the middle muscles begin to protest. At first, half a dozen lifts will tire you Keep it up, and after a time you will carry the count up to fifty or more lifts without stopping or *suffering inconvenience. It is a* wonderful muscle strengthener and also it is a good way to induce sleep if used after you go to bed.

Second

* *Slowly steadi ly" that is the way to get results.*

Lying on your back, place legs together Straighten them out and hold them stiff with toes pointed. Then lift both legs together to the perpendicular and let them down slowly Keep them straight, knees firm, toes pointed. Lift the legs slowly but steadily and let them down in the same manner

This *is a strenuous* exercise. Tackle it carefully so as not to strain nor exhaust yourself

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should help you to gain a better understanding *of the general sensation of deep breathing* It is the type of breathing which should become habitual with you.

PRACTICE

** A little exercise, every day is better than a lot of it all on the same day*

You have now gone through a series of ex periences in posture and exercises. For improvement, start using the suggested exercises, as outlined in the following "Rehearsal Chart." Set up a time schedule, beginning gently and working up to more strenuous endeavor

Some of the breathing exercises can be used without any special time or arrangements. School yourself to constant deep inhalation. While walking or working or seated at your desk, you can remember to inhale deeply with out in any way interfering with what you are doing When you begin to do this without hav ing to "remember you may be sure that your good breathing habits are taking root.

REHEARSAL CHART

1 **On the back, relax, then inhale deeply lifting the abdomen with the inhalation and depressing with exhalation. Count as you inhale and again as you exhale Begin with four counts, slowly and increase the count to six, eight, or more Try to establish the sense of "rhythmic breathing."** *(One minute)*

2. Stand erect, back against the wall. Inhale and exhale to count, as above, always using the abdominal muscles and keeping chest quiet. *(One minute)*
3. Stand erect, away from the wall, body erect, chin depressed, hands at sides. Inhale and exhale deeply keeping up the action of abdominal muscles. *(One minute)*
4. On the back, place a large book or other weight on the abdominal section. Lift and lower it by deep breathing. Count, as in No. 1 above. *(One minute)*

FOR MUSCULAR TRAINING

1. Lie on the back, open the mouth, and pant like a dog. *(One minute.)*
2. Stand erect, with back against wall, and repeat the panting, slowly then fast. *(One minute.)*
3. Lie on the back and repeat panting. Then, without inhaling, repeat the muscular movement. Repeat this exercise standing. *(One minute and 30 seconds.)*
4. Harden the abdominal muscles without use of breath. Tense the muscles. Then tap, first with fingertips, then with palms of hands, and finally with clenched fists. Gradually increase force *(One minute at first. Increase time as muscles become hardened.)*

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CHAPTER FIVE

Controlled Breathing (B)

The voice of man provides accents which no words of a writer can convey. The written word has no importance compared with an oft-repeated truth, carried from mouth to mouth.

—S. G. Hutchinson

Breath control is as important as deep breathing. The one follows the other. Good voice comes along with them, plus other things.

Never mind about the chest expansion.

For good voice production, you need not become a "Young Samson," having eight or ten inches of chest expansion. In fact, you need not bother about chest expansion at all. It will come as you learn to use your diaphragm, but it is not an end in itself. The support needed for a good voice is easy natural breathing controlled from the diaphragm.

Keep those shoulders quiet.

You can judge the correctness of your breathing by watching your shoulders. If they heave, are raised as you inhale, you are missing the "deep-breathing" effect. Shoulders quiet! Lower muscles active! That is the rule.

As a matter of interest, you may like to know that normal breathing takes in from 110 to 150 cubic inches of air. The capacity is increased by exercise and practice, but it is

thus far you are ready now to go on with ef forts to acquire pitch and placement, articula tion and enunciation, so thoroughly essential to good speech.

EXERCISES

Before going on to the next study let us review the exercises already given, and add five more studies in better breathing.

First

A rubber ball! Think of that

Imagine that your body is a hollow rubber ball. Think of a rubber ball which can be compressed between the fingers, so as to squeeze out all the air When the pressure on the ball is released, its elasticity causes the walls to spring apart, so that air is taken in to full capacity Try to get the same effect on your self. Exhale every bit of air Keep on, even after you feel that the air is completely ex pelled. Then, when no more can be forced out, let nature take its course.

Observe how the air rushes in. Note that the diaphragm comes into play in spite of you. It takes a deep, full inhalation to satisfy your hunger for air Repeat this process frequently but not more than three or four times at each repetition. This is an exercise you can take without interrupting your work.

Second

Exhale comfortably and then take a moder ately filling breath, not crowding your capaci

not desirable to build up excessive capacity What you need is plenty of air dependably supplied and well distributed, so that impurities are washed out and oxygen is provided in such quantities as will sustain life at the best. Experimentation will show you that it is possible to take in the air needed to replenish that which has been exhaled in a very short space of time Indeed, the 150 cubic inches of air approximately can be inhaled in a fraction of a second if speed is required

** Your lungs need a bath — an "air wash."*

BREATH PRODUCES VOICE

Deep controlled breathing is a necessity for good tone production Steady deep rhythmical respiration must become habitual

There must be a column of air to support the tone. The depth and steadiness of this column will determine the depth and quality of the voice. Try to think of the diaphragm as the foundation on which this air column rests, and by which it is controlled as it comes up to meet the vocal organs. The air on expiration should be emitted through the mouth if tone is to be produced. If even a little is permitted to go through the nose, a nasal tone may result.

The exercises which are presented on the preceding pages have been planned to help you develop right breathing habits, together with relaxation If you have exercised faithfully

thus far you are ready now to go on with efforts to acquire pitch and placement, articulation and enunciation, so thoroughly essential to good speech.

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Second

Exhale comfortably and then take a moderately filling breath, not crowding your capaci-

Hold your breath — but not for too long a time.

ty Hold the breath for 15 seconds, and then exhale quietly Repeat this frequently for sever al days. Then begin to lengthen the holding time. Hold it for 20 seconds, then for 30 and later on for 45 Presently you will be able to hold your breath for a full minute without inconvenience. Go at it moderately increase con servatively and avoid strain It all helps to develop breath control through strengthening the diaphragm and related muscles.

Third

Standing erect, inhale with five short, quick gasps through the open mouth. You will observe that you cannot gasp" without using the diaphragm. Five gasps should fill you to capac ity first expanding the lower ribs, and then filling the upper chest. Exhale each time in five quick gasps or puffs. After acquiring this skill, practice the gasping and puffing through the nose, with mouth closed

Fourth

Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Practice laughing with a big "ha ha ha!" strongly emphasizing the 'ha!" Carry the "ha ha! to complete exhalation and then inhale deeply and quickly

Fifth

Close your lips and 'laugh through the nose, making no sound The diaphragm will get the exercise, whether you breathe through mouth

or nose, but laughing soundlessly through the nose will promote better control.

WARNING

Don't overload your lung capacity

Do not make the mistake of thinking that you must fill the lungs to full capacity before speaking. Never let your lungs become distended with too much wind when you are about to speak. Keep the breathing easy and comfortable.

Control the breath unconsciously by means of muscular and mental strength developed by the exercises, but keep the breathing so natural and quiet when speaking that it will be unobserved by the audience. Catch a quick, easy breath at natural pauses, and your well-trained muscles will do the rest.

Especially if you are using a microphone, either for radio speech or for an amplifying device, be careful that your breathing sounds are not taken up by the mike and magnified to your listeners. Good breathing is noiseless, or nearly so. Good speech is not "breathy."

It will pay you to memorize the words of François Joseph Talma, the French tragedian "Every artist who lets himself run out of breath is nothing more than mediocre."

Hold your breath — but not for too long a time.

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REHEARSAL CHART

1 Squeeze all the air out of your body, as out of a hollow rubber ball. Let the air rush in to fill the vacancy

2 Exhale comfortably, and then inhale moderately Hold the breath for 15 seconds, and then exhale quietly After this becomes easy, lengthen the holding time to 20 seconds, and then to 30 Practice holding the breath for such time as can be comfortably done, without undue straining.

** Always keep comfortable while you are exercising. Don t work too hard or too long at a time*

3 Stand erect. Inhale with short quick gasps, through the open mouth. Then exhale in similar gasps, or puffs. Five gasps should fill the lungs, and five gasps should empty them. Practice the gasping exercise with mouth closed.

4. Laugh with a big "ha ha ha!" Keep on with the "ha ha!" to complete exhalation, and then inhale deeply and quickly

5 Close the lips (keeping the throat relaxed) and then "laugh" through the nose. It takes practice to learn to do this well, but it is excellent to promote better muscular control.

CHAPTER SIX

Your Other Voice

> *Her voice was disillusioning. It was the curve of her charm dipping sharply downward. It was flat — complaining.*
>
> —Hugh Pentecost

You do have another voice — better one than the one you are using

The chances are ten to one that the voice you are using is not your "best" voice. It is time now to help you find that other voice, and bring it into use. You may have buried it under bad habits of speech so that it will be hard to locate, but you cannot afford to leave it unused, if you want to be a good speaker

You have now learned how to relax, and you have started on controlled breathing. Having faithfully followed the exercises given to develop correct habits of breathing you are using your diaphragm and your abdominal muscles. It is time now to direct the breathing to improved tone production.

FIND YOUR VOICE

Sit in a comfortable chair Lean back and relax. Extend your legs before you. Put your hands above your head and yawn. Make it a big deep, relaxed yawn. Do it again. Inhale

REHEARSAL CHART

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5. Close the lips (keeping the throat relaxed) and then "laugh" through the nose. It takes practice to learn to do this well, but it is excellent to promote better muscular control.

CHAPTER SIX

Your Other Voice

Her voice was disillusioning. It sent the curve of her lines dipping sharply downward. It was flat — complaining.

—Bruce Prescott

You do have another voice — better one than the one you are using

The chances are ten to one that the voice you are using is not your "best" voice. It is time now to help you find that other voice, and bring it into use. You may have buried it under bad habits of speech so that it will be hard to locate, but you cannot afford to leave it unused, if you want to be a good speaker.

You have now learned how to relax, and you have started on controlled breathing. Having faithfully followed the exercises given to develop correct habits of breathing, you are using your diaphragm and your abdominal muscles. It is time now to direct the breathing to improved tone production.

FIND YOUR VOICE

Sit in a comfortable chair. Lean back and relax. Extend your legs before you. Put your hands above your head and yawn. Make it a big deep relaxed yawn. Do it again. Inhale

deeply first stretching your belt, then lifting your ribs, and yawn again with a satisfying completeness.

What a big mouth you have when you open it to yawn!

Finish the yawn with a prolonged "ho-ho-ho-hum m-m." With all the muscles of face and jaw and throat relaxed, and with all tensions removed, repeat the yawning and "ho-ho-hum-m-ing"

Observe how much resonance and depth of tone you get in that "ho-hum finish of the yawn. Place your fingers on the bridge of your nose, and on your forehead, and you can feel the vibrations as you hum.

Here you have found the way to develop resonance, and probably you have discovered a new voice quality which you have not been using

USE YOUR BEST VOICE

This new voice quality, deeper and more resonant, is your other voice, and in all probability it is your "best voice."

Let s start using it.

Surprising — how easy and resonant your tones can be!

Yawn again and when you have started the "ho-hum," go right ahead talking on that same deep resonant tone. Count, or repeat the alpha bet, as a beginning Then speak some words which call for depth

Say "Blow blow thou winter wind."

"Thou, too sail on, O Ship of State."

It will be fine if you can use this kind of tone in all your speaking. Maybe you can.

Say "How now brown cow!" and keep the *tones big and well-rounded.* Open the mouth to its comfortable limit. Observe that the "ow" sound requires a loosely dropped jaw Be sure that your jaw not only drops, but that it drops with relaxed muscles.

Yawn again, to make sure of your voice, and then say "The road to Rome is rugged, rough and long." Make it a big tone. Give it a commanding effect.

Now say "Mr Chairman and ladies and gentlemen" in that big resonant tone. Add a few sentences, just as though you were making a speech in a large room.

Whenever you feel the slightest tension in your muscles, or observe that your voice is losing its depth and resonance, stop for another yawn, relax, and start again.

Try to use this new quality in all your talk. Spend a little time each day with the yawning exercises until relaxation becomes easy without yawning.

Do not be discouraged if your voice shows a tendency to revert to its former unpleasantness and tightness. Fixed habits are hard to break. Just keep on trying to bring that "best"

voice into automatic, unconscious use, so that you do not need to keep on reminding yourself of it.

FORM THE HABIT

Let us stress those two words, "automatic" and "unconscious. They suggest the basis for all good speech.

** Automatic — unconscious." But you still have to think about what you are saying*

"The impulse to speak," said Dr J M Buckley "is of necessity automatic, and the succession of words though controllable by the will sufficiently to admit of conscious rational communication of thought and feeling and of repression when speaking is deemed inexpedient, must ever remain largely automatic otherwise there would have to be a special will effort for each word, and the phenomena of conversation properly so called and of extemporaneous oratory would be impossible

Thus, it is essential to have all the elements of speech become automatic in action Breathing tone placing inflection must be done correctly by habit. Grammatical construction pronunciation enunciation must be habitually right.

You cannot afford to be careless with your voice or your words in your ordinary conversation if you want to be able to speak well on important occasions. But, happily if you are careful to form the correct habits by assiduous

effort and practice, presently the habits will take care of themselves, and your speech will be excellent without your conscious volition.

Nature does wonderful things for us if we lend her a helping hand.

PRACTICE

Continue reviewing the deep-breathing exercises until your controlled breathing becomes habitual.

To practice such exercises does not mean that you must go into privacy. You are breathing all the time. Make your breathing serve as exercise. Many of the exercises suggested can be used while you are about your work, walking, sitting at your desk, or driving.

Try working on the noisier exercises while driving the car. Probably the car noises will cover your efforts. The hum of the motor will help you develop resonance in the tones as you hum in tune with it.

If you live in the country or in the suburbs, perhaps you can play at calling the cattle or the dog. Even "hog-calling" might help to project your voice so as to get it in the right form.

Try playing with the baby. He will be amused by your funny faces and strange sounds.

Whatever expedients may be necessary do not neglect daily practice. Make deep breath ing a habit, and cultivate the deeper tones of your voice in ordinary speech Every sentence you speak can be made a practice in better speaking

REHEARSAL CHART

1 Yawn, finishing with a relaxed "ho-ho-hum m-m."

2. Yawn, finishing with the "hum-m-m," and then go on speaking repeating the alpha bet, or counting

3 Speak some resonant words, holding the effect of the relaxed "hum-m m."

> *"How now brown cow!"*
> *"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean roll!"*
> *"Why you shall say at break of day Sail on! Sail on! Sail on! and on!'"*
> *"Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,*
> *Hard as they were able*
> *Boom Boom, BOOM!"*

4 Keep on yawning, humming, and then speaking in the relaxed tone, until the new ly discovered voice becomes habitual.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Placing The Voice

To a nice ear the quality of a voice is singularly affecting. Its depth seems to be allied to feeling; at least, the contralto notes give an adequate sense of pathos. They are born near the heart.

—Henry T. Tuckerman

That is not a good way to word the chapter heading, but it is used for lack of something better. Of course you do not actually "place" the voice. *Nature does that for you. Your part* is to keep from "misplacing" it.

At least, you will not misplace your voice if you follow the plan.

The word "place" is used to help focus attention on the fact that the finished tone must appear to be placed at the lips. It is to help you realize the importance of thinking the tone forward.

Many speakers talk with the tense throat and jaw and thus give themselves and their hearers *the feeling* that the tone comes from the throat. That is bad. Don't let yourself do it.

Generally speaking, any physical sensation in the throat during tone production is a danger signal. It indicates something wrong about the process of tone formation.

VOICE QUALITIES

Sound has three dimensions, or qualities. These are pitch, force or loudness, and timbre (tone color or resonance quality)

Pitch is based upon the frequency of vibrations. Higher pitch means more rapid vibrations, or shorter wave length, to borrow a radio term.

Loudness is measured by the amplitude of the vibrations Sound gains in loudness when the vibrations increase in size.

Variations in the shapes of vibrations, largely dependent upon resonance, cause the difference in quality or timbre, or tone color

"Tone color is what we want to put into your voice.

The voice is produced by the rhythmical interruption of an expiratory blast of air by the vibrating vocal cords.

When breath is exhaled through the mouth with wide-open throat, no vocal sound is produced. But when the breath is brought in contact with the vocal cords, through narrowing of the glottis and activation of the cords, voice is created.

Your task, as a student, is to improve quality regulate pitch, and control loudness through proper voice production which includes breathing

That is the fundamental purpose of all this information and these exercises

OUT OF THE THROAT

Let us assume that you have followed the previous instructions well enough so that you have learned something about deep breathing and can relax your jaw and throat muscles. The next problem is to bring your voice "out of the throat" where so many people appear to keep it, and to place it "forward" where it belongs.

Thinking your tone helps to make the tone as it should be.

"Placing" the voice requires as much mental as muscular control. You must "think" your voice forward. Try to feel that the tone is produced on your lips. Of course that is not quite the truth, but it may help you for the present to think that way

Start by loosening up the muscles. The "ho-hum" exercise is good. Try again the "How now brown cow!" sentence. Open the mouth to the comfortable limits. Speak loudly and freely with clear resonant tone. Imagine that the cow is forty rods away and that you are addressing her in tones of authority Speak to her persuasively threateningly angrily pleasantly Keep the throat muscles relaxed. Drop the jaw at each word.

You do not have to be a ventriloquist to throw your voice

You will observe that the voice tends to come forward as you call to someone at a distance. Don't yell or shriek. Just try to project the tone across the intervening space without losing its quality

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you turn yourself loose, you will soon feel the effect in a general loosening up of tone, in a new resonance, and in easier less conscious opening of the mouth and relaxing of muscles.

You will have a new sense of power and control as your voice gains in depth and ease.

"FRONT AND CENTER"

You must make a conscious effort to think the voice "forward."

On the tip of your tongue.

Of course we understand that the tone is formed in the throat, by the combined efforts of the vocal cords and their appurtenances, but the tone must be "felt" with the lips and teeth, right on the tip of your tongue. That is what we mean by "placing" the voice.

There are various exercises by which you can get this feeling. One way is by trilling the consonant sound. You can produce this by using words beginning with *r* or with some combination like *br pr thr* and so on. Take such words as *bright*, *praise three thrifty* and trill the first sound.

Another way to develop this forward feeling is by using the explosive consonants with a vowel sound. Say "pah" or "bah" or "mah" with emphasis on lip action.

Always be certain that the jaw and throat muscles are relaxed. Do not permit the exercises to cause them to tighten. It will take prac

"HI-HO

"High in the middle and round at both ends." That's O-HI-O And that is the way your tone may become.

Next, we must get that sense of resonance more fully developed. Speak the name of the great State of *Ohio* Separate the syllables with mouth opened wide. Now put some variety into the pitch. Start the first 'O" on a low note then step up several tones on the 'HI' and come down again on the final 'O "

In diagram, it would look something like this

HI
"O- O"

Try it over many times. Exaggerate the 'HI and put plenty of power into the supporting breath.

If you can sing even a little bit, pick up the lively tune from *Snow White* which runs

HO
HI
HO!"
"HI

Perhaps little Snow White" can help you.

Never mind about off to work we go" You stay right here and exercise your voice. Even if you can t carry a tune, speak the words with *freedom* and *resonance* — and with relaxed muscles.

Direct the call to someone a block away Make the tones ring You can do it if you let yourself go.

These exercises should make you feel pretty good — perhaps pretty foolish, too — but if

that their speech is tiresome. We get the ear ache from them, while they gain hoarseness and sore throats. Thus we all lose.

Speech is easy when you speak right.

You must remember as one of the fundamental facts, that sore throat or huskiness of voice after you have spoken is an indication of wrong use of the vocal organs. Physical sensation in the throat while tone is being produced indicates "forcing" or some other error in speech. The throat and jaw muscles must be relaxed, and your thought of tone production must be localized at the lips and the tip of the tongue. *Speech is easy* both on the throat and on the listener when speech is produced in the right way

tice — lots of it, but you can do it. Work for short periods every day

You may be certain that your voice is "for ward and in order" *provided* the jaw is relaxed and the breath support is good.

"CLERGYMAN S SORE THROAT"

Some public speakers seem to have a notion that they have not done their full duty until they have screamed themselves hoarse.

You don t have to yell in order to be heard

Preachers used to be subject to this delusion The minister shouted and exhorted so fervently that his voice was hardly more than a whisper at the end of an hour or two of preaching and no doubt he felt that he had given his all for the good work. That was the origin of the phrase, clergyman s sore throat.

It is a pity that the poor parson could not have realized that he was abusing one of God s great gifts to men for if he had used his voice even reasonably well, there would have been no sore throat, no cracking of the tone.

Many speakers, especially preachers and political spellbinders, make themselves unintelligible by their yelling A man who was hard of hearing one day said to his pastor a notably loud speaker "You speak so loudly that I can t hear you. Everyone of us has heard speakers of that sort, and we hardly need to be reminded

that their speech is tiresome. We get the ear ache from them, while they gain hoarseness and sore throats. Thus we all lose.

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REHEARSAL CHART

1 Sing "Hi Ho! Hi Ho!" as though you were calling to someone at a distance. Keep the lips flexible. Drop the jaw easily Relax.

2. Practice trilling. Try such words as "Three thriving, thrifty thrummers," and "Bright branches of bristling briars." Keep the throat relaxed Trill with the lips.

*You need room when you do these exercises.

3 Speak explosively, using such words as "boom, bar, bell"; "part, poor people." Make up your own words or phrases. Feel *the explosion of breath right on the lips.* Keep jaws relaxed Try to feel the substantial support of the breath from the muscles of the abdomen

CHAPTER EIGHT

Locate The Vowel Sounds

But the good qualities of the voice, like those of all our other faculties, are improved by attention and deteriorated by neglect.

—QUINTILIAN

We are not going into any discussion of the anatomy of the vocal apparatus in this book. If you are interested in that, you can find it in many books, with diagrams and maps. Our interest is in learning how to make the simplest and most natural use of the organs involved, and we do not need to study them in great detail for that purpose.

You will be better off, however, for an elementary understanding of the way that the long vowel sounds are produced, and their locations.

See [illegible] Watch how it is formed. If you are it [illegible] relaxes your throat.

The vowels, as you must know, are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u*. In vocal instruction, these are ordinarily used with the Italian pronunciation, so that they sound like *ah*, *ayr*, *ee*, *o* and *oo*. Pronounced freely, with full tone and open throat, these syllables make a good vocalizer.

Place a liquid consonant (*l*, *m*, *n*, or *r*) before each vowel sound, and it is still better

Thus *Lah-lay-lee-lo-loo* Or make it *Nah nay nee no-noo*

The 'ah sound is used as a starter because it is the middle tone in production, and helps to open the throat and produce a fine, big tone.

** Chase the sounds up and down your tongue.*

If you will watch the several sounds you will observe that ah" locates itself about half way back on the tongue. Then the aye sound appears to move forward while "ee" seems to be produced almost on the tip of the tongue. Notice how the tongue moves up toward the roof of the mouth as the three syllables are formed. Now say "o" and note that it is formed at the base of the tongue, while oo feels as though it were clear down in the throat.

Regardless of the apparent location of the tone formation each sound must have the feel ing of being placed on the lips. This is where those liquid consonants come into service, for each of them tends to come forward in its enunciation and it brings the other sound with it.

PRACTICE

Start with the series *nah nay nee no noo*

Intone this on the same pitch, on a monotone prolonging each syllable and stressing the initial *n* Watch your tongue Note that as you

start the sound of *n* the tongue instinctively presses itself against the upper front teeth. You cannot product a first-class "n" sound with your tongue in any other position. Let this remind you to "think" your tone to that forward position.

The tongue twists itself around the complex sounds.

Repeat this series of syllables at varying rates of speed, very slowly then faster But in every case watch the changing lip formation as the vowels change. From the wide-open position on "ah," the lips narrow slightly on "aye," and still more so on "ee." On "o" the lips are rounded, with increasing roundness on "oo." Exaggerate these lip movements. Culti vate labial flexibility Make ridiculous faces if you must. It is all *for* the sake of your voice.

If you have an ear for music, introduce the singing quality into your practice tones. Go to the piano and strike "c." Then sing *aa-nay nee-no-noo* on that tone. Make it ring. Step up a tone, and do it again. Practice singing it on as many different pitches as you can do comfortably

[illegible]

If you can't sing practice the syllables on any tone, but bring out the resonance. Please don't just grunt or squeak the sounds. Sing or shout them freely with open mouth and relaxed muscles.

Imagine how Nelson Eddy would make this exercise sound. Then try to sound as much like

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rest of the syllables. Then say pa. Make the sounds explosive—forcible Give the diaphragm a chance every time Use the lips freely Open the mouth.

BE REASONABLE

Of course you can't do all of this every day But you can do a little work each day and several times a day Keep the matter in mind and turn to the exercises whenever you get a chance. Work softly Don't try for volume Don't strain yourself.

You will not build a fine big, resonant, completely satisfactory voice in just a few days or even weeks. It is a long process, but it is worth while.

Let s go about it reasonably and intelligently setting certain goals, reaching them, and then setting higher marks to strive for

REVIEW

By this time, if you are taking this work as you would take a course of medical treatments, daily according to directions on the bottle you have at least started putting the friendly note into your speech you have begun to relax and loosen up your throat and jaw muscles you have discovered your diaphragm and its relation to your breathing and speaking you have begun to control the breathing and to di

him as you can. (Yes, Nelson Eddy and every other great singer has used this exercise, or something much like it, to develop resonance and fullness of tone)

Put other consonant sounds before the five vowel sounds. Sing *la-lay-lee-lo-loo* and *ma may mee mo-moo* Observe the difference in lip action as you change the consonant. The tongue position is much the same with "l" and "n." What makes the difference in sound? Try to figure it out. But when you start with "m" the tongue has little to do This sound starts on the lips. Emphasize these motions and positions and exaggerate them. Watch especially the tongue and lips when you say *ra ray ree ro-roo*

* *It may sound funny but it is wonderful exercise to develop good tones.*

Now we are to combine the long vowel sounds with other than liquid consonants.

Start with "h." Say *ha-hay-hee-ho-hoo* Note that the effect of "h" is explosive. The sound is produced by forcible expulsion of breath. In fact, there is no "h" sound, by itself You must connect this letter with some other to produce audible results.

Notice that when you say "hah" the abdominal muscles enter vigorously into the performance. That is good for you and for your voice

Try the syllables with the so-called muted consonants, "b" and "p" Say *ba-bay* and the

CHAPTER NINE

Speak Distinctly

"Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines."

—SHAKESPEARE

One of the most annoying speech habits is that of indistinctness. If you speak, you should be understood. If you mouth your words, swallow them, suppress them, mumble them, people will soon grow tired of trying to follow your thought.

Let your voice come out. Don't force it in.

Probably the commonest causes for indistinct enunciation are failure to open the mouth, and lack of lip action. "Lazy lips" cause no end of hard-to-understand talk.

The tone has to come out before it can get anywhere.

A speaker would hardly think of holding a sheet of cardboard before his mouth. If he talks through his teeth, through a half-opened mouth—he gets the same effect. Failure to open the mouth makes it impossible to pronounce the consonants clearly and obscures the vowel sounds. It obstructs the volume and resonance, and tends to make voice and speech generally disagreeable.

rect it you have discovered your "other" voice and you have made a start at locating your tones on or near your lips.

Take an hour off from other activities to run through the pages you have covered up to this time, and see just how much you have actually accomplished—how much of the right kind of breathing and tone formation has become habitual automatic with you Then you will be ready to proceed (Or you may decide to go back and work on some of the things you have *not yet accomplished to your satisfaction.* Whatever else you do don t quit now)

REHEARSAL CHART

** Loose jaw! Flexible lips! Lively tongue! Deep breathing! And RELAX!*

1 Sing: "Nah-nay nee-no-noo" with loose jaw, flexible lips, and *big tone* Make the *n* very prominent.

2. Sing "Lah-lay lee-lo-loo" and "Mah-may mee-mo-moo," always stressing the initial consonant sound Watch the action of the tongue.

3 Use the same syllables, but change the initial consonants, so as to begin with *r*, with *b* and *p*. Give special attention to the use of *h*, as in "hah hay-hee-ho-hoo " Make the sounds explosive.

4 Remember: Loose jaw; flexible lips; active tongue; strong support from the lower body muscles. Guard against any tendency to constriction in the throat Relax! *Relax!!*

Analyze the words.

jaw are involved. Say "pro - nun - see - aye - shun." Each syllable calls for a different lip arrangement. The first syllable finds the jaw up, while the second drops it down. The third draws up, the fourth drops down, and the final "shun" brings the jaw about to a halfway point. You can help yourself definitely by analyzing polysyllable words as to position of the vocal apparatus (tongue, teeth, lips, jaw) on the various syllables. This will help you to realize the importance of careful enunciation.

Perhaps you are all right on this phase to begin with. To make sure try talking before a mirror

Watch your lips as you speak in a natural manner

Do you talk with mouth nearly closed? Are the lips immovable, or sluggish in action?

Still looking into the mirror try some exercises. Exaggerate every movement of mouth and lips.

Spread your mouth in a wide grin. Stretch the muscles.

Pucker up your lips and push them forward as far as possible.

Soundlessly frame your lips to produce the vowel sounds. Whisper the sounds very softly if you must. Exaggerate the lip movements as you think these sounds.

* *Have you really mastered these?*

Having mastered the exercises for relaxation you have learned to drop the jaw and loosen the throat muscles. Make sure that your lips are not shirking To insure good enunciation they must be flexible and active. They can be trained.

ENUNCIATION — PRONUNCIATION

These two words are much alike in origin, but quite distinctive in connotation You need to have the distinction clearly in mind.

* *Not a great deal of difference between the words, but that difference is important.*

Pronunciation refers to the phonetic utterance of words. It deals with the sounds of letters, accent, and such matters as are involved in giving acceptable articulation, phonetically speaking

Enunciation relates to the fulness and clearness of articulating these sounds. Of course, pronunciation may properly include enunciation for good pronunciation is hardly possible without clear enunciation It is possible, however to give the correct phonetic rendering of a word through half-closed lips. That is why we must stress enunciation as a separate element.

These two words, incidentally furnish in themselves a good exercise. Say each one carefully slowly with over-attention to distinctness Observe how many motions of the lips and

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jaw are involved. Say "pro nun see - aye shun." Each syllable calls for a different lip arrangement. The first syllable finds the jaw up, while the second forces it down. The third draws up, the fourth drops down, and the final "shun" brings the jaw about to a halfway point. You can help yourself definitely by analyzing polysyllable words as to position of the vocal apparatus (tongue, teeth, lips, jaw) on the various syllables. This will help you to realize the importance of careful enunciation.

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Prove that your face is alive — not a 'dead pan.

Speak syllables or words, watching in the glass to see how widely your mouth will open in the process.

Say "wow wow wow wow" and watch your mouth open — your jaw drop (Let it drop. Don t force it down Keep the jaws relaxed.)

Say 'well, well, well,' as though surprised at something

Perhaps you will be surprised when you see how your mouth can work.

Pronounce in com pre hen si ble," with careful attention to each syllable.

Say incalculably meticulous evaluation," making the lips do their full duty by every syllable.

Now begin to speak or read complete sen tences, speaking slowly with exaggerated distinctness, giving every letter its full phonetic value. Practice before the mirror and away from it.

Watch yourself when you talk in casual con versation Is your speech of the 'Gladdameecha,' 'Gottagetoutahere," "S noplace f'rus' type? You may be surprised at yourself when you begin to listen to what you say

TONGUE TWISTERS

This carefulness may slow down your rate of speech. That is not a bad idea. Perhaps you

talk too fast. You may discover other defects. Look out for them, and try to correct them. Make your speech as good as it can be. You owe that much to yourself.

**Tongue-twisters may be silly but they do help you to control your mouth. Whisper them; talk them, but pick up those lazy lips.*

Try twisting your tongue around silly sets of words like these

> *Geese cackle, cows moo, cats mew, crows caw, cocks crow.*
>
> *A blue, black bank-book blew back of Black's bank building.*
>
> *Bobby Blower's blowers blot blots.*
>
> *Shrewd, shrinking, short-sighted Simon shov-eled shredded shrimps.*

Thanks to Gilbert and Sullivan and The Mikado.

> *To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,*
> *In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,*
> *Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,*
> *From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!*

Improvement of your enunciation is one of your most important tasks. It takes time and thought, but it can be done, and it is worth all it costs.

Good enunciation is fundamental to good speech.

REHEARSAL CHART

1 Standing before the mirror, say

incomprehensible
procrastination
insubordination
astronomical
alleviation

Give each syllable full value. Watch the jaws, the tongue and the lips. *Keep the voice out of the throat.*

2. Before the mirror, say

wow! wow! wow!
well! well! well! well!

Keep the jaw in action at each word.

3 Before the mirror, say

"I am glad to meet you."

Then say "I'm gladda meecha," watching *the difference in your face, especially the* mouth.

4. Keep on practicing before the mirror until you can open your mouth without em barrassment or self-consciousness.

CHAPTER TEN

Be Kind To Vowels And Consonants

His voice attraction still as midnight's dream,
His voice more gentle than the summer's breeze.
—Darmon

It takes both vowels and consonants to produce beautiful speech. Study them with care.

Perhaps you would like to know just what is the distinction between vowels and consonants. Probably you would find it hard to give a satisfactory definition of either or to explain the distinction.

The name *vowel* was used by the Latin grammarians to designate a sound made with the voice (*vocalis*) while *consonant* indicated another "sounding with" it (*consonans*)

In the case of vowels, resonance of the vocal cavities is the determining factor The sound is an open, unobstructed utterance of voice, modified by the resonance of the vocal cavities so as to give it a definite "quality"

A consonant sound is one which gains its character from some obstruction or stricture at some point in the breath passage which modifies the utterance and makes it identifiable. A consonant has very little chance unless it is accompanied by a vowel sound.

A vowel sound can stand alone, as when we say "Ah! or Oh!" or "You!" but it takes the two forms of utterance to get very far in making sense. Therefore, it is desirable that the speaker be as considerate as possible in *dealing with both kinds of sound. If you under* stand them, you will use them better

ANALYZE THE SOUND

** And now you must listen to yourself as you speak slowly carefully to get these fine distinctions.*

Pronounce the common vowel sounds slowly, giving each its full value. Say "a-e-i-o-u' care*fully prolonging each one beyond its usual* length.

Observe that "e" is the only one which stands alone. *Each of the others is a combination of* two vowel sounds.

Speak the other vowels, enunciating slowly and prolonging the sound. You will get the following effects.

Long *a* has the vanishing sound of *e*. Thus, *you will say "aye-ee" when you give it full* value.

Long *i* is distinctly two sounds. Say it slowly *and you have ah-ee.*

Long *o*, carried to completion, ends with the sound of "oo." It sounds like oh-oo if you complete it, bringing the lips together

Long *u* correctly enunciated, is "ee-oo" Sometimes it is represented by "iu but when

it is so represented you must remember that the *i* is short.

Shall we "mew" or "moo"?

Taking the case of the last-named letter as an illustration, let us see what it means to careful enunciation.

Whenever you have the sound of long *u* in a word, it is entitled to that "ee-oo" pronunciation. Here are a few examples

few	pew	feudal
mew	view	curious
cue	mute	putrid
hew	beautiful	mutual

Pronounce each of those words carefully giving full value to the sound of long *u*.

Next, pronounce the following

new	due	jewel
Tuesday	duty	Sue

Do you call it "Toosday" "noo," "dooty" "Soo"? But if you pronounce "new" as "noo," shouldn t you let the cat "moo" instead of "mew"?

This long *u* sound is much abused in daily speech. It may be worth your while to join the campaign in its behalf But if you do try it, don't make the mistake made by many and start saying "Chewsday" and "juty" and pronouncing some other such words in an exaggerated manner

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Long *u* correctly enunciated, is ee-oo" Sometimes it is represented by "iu" but when

it is so represented you must remember that the i is short.

Shall we purr or mew?

Taking the case of the last named letter as an illustration, let us see what it means to careful enunciation.

Whenever you have the sound of long *u* in a word, it is entitled to that "ee-oo" pronunciation. Here are a few examples

few	pew	feudal
mew	view	curious
cue	mute	putrid
hew	beautiful	mutual

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Good speech sounds natural, but not all "natural" speech is good.

What you want, as a speaker is clear distinct, natural-appearing speech. You want to avoid lazy mumbling and mouthing of words, and at the same time you must keep away from the over nice sort of speech which seems to be striving for "elegance. Try a happy medium. Make good speech just as natural and just as unobtrusive as good manners at the table.

When you make that speech recording and listen to it, watch your enunciation with care. Are the letter-sounds correctly formed so as to be easily heard and understood? Listen for words which may be slurred and slighted

Some people actually talk like this!

For an exercise, repeat some of those mistreated words, regardless of meaning For ex ample T'm absloотly fraid the gov'munt is gonna use plitical infloonce on ejication."

It looks ridiculous doesn't it? And it sounds ridiculous to the cultured ear when speakers use such language Many of them do it. *Maybe you do it!* The purpose of this chapter is to en courage you to take such care that you will not only not be ridiculous in speech, but that you may be a paragon — an exemplar of good speech.

GOOD ENUNCIATION

Good enunciation helps you to be heard more *easily* at a distance. To be heard is not a matter of how *loud* but how *clear* the speech is A good

actor can make his softest speech heard throughout the theater

Good enunciation adds beauty to your speech. It brings out the music in the words. It gives you a sense of authority It commands respect —makes your audience wish to listen.

HOW TO DEVELOP GOOD ENUNCIATION

First, you must decide that you are going to be careful in speech. No more careless, sloppy slovenly talking! You are going to be your best.

Take care Carelessness causes most of your slips in speech. Be careful.

Next, your mouth must be capable of opening You might as well talk with your hand before your mouth as to talk with teeth and lips half closed. *Open your mouth.*

Third, put those lazy lips to work. Make them flexible. Wrap the lips around the word as though it were a tasty morsel.

Fourth, make your tongue respond to your demands. This is less difficult, because the tongue usually does act more or less without your conscious direction but if it does not behave well for you if it gets in the way of your words, teach it to keep its place.

Fifth, practice. Every time you speak a word, remind yourself to speak it well. Then when you call a number on the phone, you will not be heard saying "H'lo. 'Smister Li'lton there? Yeah, lemme speak t im, willya?"

LAZY LIPS AND TORPID TONGUE

To help you realize the essential part in speech played by lips and tongue, try this ex periment.

** Talking with your mouth shut prepares you to open it for better enunciation*

Speak some familiar lines with lips closed and without making any sound For example, the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag will serve.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation indivisible, with *Liberty and Justice for all."*

Keep your jaw relaxed and flexible and try to form the words without opening the lips at all See what happens!

Your tongue twists and stretches and exerts itself in all directions. It touches the roof of your mouth twice on "pledge, and twice more on *allegiance." Remember that the tongue* should be quite as active when you are speak ing normally with open mouth if you want the speech to be clear

** This exercise will really put your lips in action*

Now try to speak the same words, still sound lessly with the lips in full action. It is easier this time, because you have the help of the tongue, but watch those lips, how they move and work *to help form the shapes of the letters.* (Don't whisper Don t produce any sound Just form the sounds of the letters without giving them any voice.)

There should be real satisfaction in achievement as you carry this exercise to successful completion.

And now remembering the vigorous action of tongue and lips, add the sound, and keep up the action. Watch your mouth in a mirror

Try this exercise on other words and paragraphs.

You can easily understand what can be done to your speech by tolerating a torpid tongue or lazy lips. Don't let them handicap you. Rather make these essential parts of speech your faithful servants, performing their part in production of clear correct, easily understood *words and sentences.*

Attention to these simple exercises will produce results in good speech habits.

REHEARSAL CHART

Exercise before the mirror

Watch the lips and the jaws for flexibility and relaxation. Watch your facial expressions. Do the contortions involved in exaggerated enunciations threaten to make your face less attractive when you speak? You need to look as well as you can while speaking well.

** Don't be discouraged when you see how you look while speaking. Other people look just as ridiculous as you do*

1 Before the mirror, review the enunciation of the vowels, referring to the sound analysis given on page 76.

2. Before the mirror, review the words with long u and long oo listed on page 77 Observe the difference in position of lips when you say *mew* and *moo*

3. First with closed lips, then with open lips, but no sound, and finally, with open lips and full sound, read these lines:

> *For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams*
> *Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;*
> *And the stars never rise; but I feel the bright eyes*
> *Of the beautiful Annabel Lee*

4 Using any words you choose, continue to practice before the mirror with mouth closed and with mouth open, seeking ease and flexibility of tongue and lips, without producing unpleasant facial expressions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Sing Bass

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice.
—Wordsworth

Most speakers have a tendency to talk on too high a pitch, especially when they get into the heat of argument.

A thin, high-pitched tone lacks authority and appeal. It tends to harshness and unpleasantness in quality. Avoid it. Cultivate the deeper tones. In a word, "Sing bass!"

A cultivated voice uses lower tones, except when high pitch is needed.

Of course it is possible to develop too low a pitch. This results in rumbling, indistinct, ponderous speech. But a voice pitched too low is not nearly so common as the one fixed too high.

LOCATE YOUR VOICE PITCH

We assume that you have learned to relax, to control your breathing, to have a sense of resonance.

You have a natural "pitch" on which you speak. It may be good — or it may not. We now proceed to locate that natural pitch.

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4 Using any words you choose, continue to practice before the mirror with mouth closed and with mouth open, seeking ease and flexibility of tongue and lips, without producing unpleasant facial expressions.

Having located your ordinary pitch, consider whether this is the best one for your voice.

Too high. Too low. Either is bad for your voice. Find your best voice level and use it.

A good range for the speaker (considering only the men in this instance) is between "g" as the high point, and "d" or "c" as the lower limit. Of course voice gestures, modulations, inflections, will carry above and below these limits, but your normal, basic speaking tone may well be located within that range.

If your voice pitch needs to be lowered, go to work thoughtfully gently systematically You can't do it all in one day or even in a week. You must not attempt to force matters.

This will take time. Don't try to hurry the process.

Begin by deliberately pitching your voice slightly lower in all conversation. Don't try to drop it half an octave at once. Rather change it half a tone at a time. Try to follow nature in determining your best tone location. If you are a natural tenor your speaking voice will be lighter thinner higher than if you are a natural bass. But it need not be light and thin, if you treat it right.

Speaking with careful enunciation and in a not very loud tone will help get the change established. While you are working on this, of course you will remember to keep the throat relaxed and the breath coming from far down.

Review what has been said in Chapter VI about "Your Other Voice." Some yawning and

This time you may talk in a monotone—but it is only for the special purpose.

Start talking in your ordinary tone. Speak monotonously* without modulation. You can repeat the alphabet, or count slowly "One, two three, four and so on Just make sure it is at the normal level of your speech.

Now have someone at the piano locate the pitch of your voice. He may have to fumble over several keys, but you keep talking on the same pitch and let him match your tone.

If your voice is of tenor quality your speak ing tone may be as high as "g" or a."

If it is of a heavier quality a natural bari tone or bass, you may locate the normal tone on "e" or "d" or even on c a whole octave below 'middle c. If your natural tone is not higher than "e" you are at an advantage If it is much above that, your work is cut out for you Bring the tone down. If it is too low lighten it — bring it up

This is not difficult. It is easily possible to raise or lower the pitch by giving attention to the matter Suppose your voice was located on 'e' by the piano Continue your counting while your pianist strikes the next lower note. Then drop your voice to agree with the new tone You can follow the piano up or down for two or three steps without any great difficulty In deed, when you are talking your tone range will cover several steps unless you are an ex tremely monotonous speaker

CHAPTER TWELVE

Vocal Variety

> *Monotony on low pitch exerts soporific influence over an audience, which no strength of thought nor beauty of language can counteract.*
> —J. M. BUCKLEY

One of the deadly sins of the speaker — any speaker — is monotony

If the speaker sounds sleepy he can hardly hope to keep his audience awake.

One of the surest ways to lose attention and kill interest is to drone along in a monotone, without intelligent emphasis or inflection. This sweeping statement covers both conversation and public address. Vocal variety is essential in all speech of more than a sentence or two.

But watch out for extremes. Too much variety emphasis, force, enthusiasm, is as bad as too little. You know how tiresome it is to listen to the talker who screeches for emphasis.

"Oh, my dear you would *simply have died* if you could *only have heard* him tell the story! *It was perfectly killing!*"

You recognize that style of talk. It is something to avoid except when you are doing a travesty — a burlesque — on voice modulation. Maybe it would be good for you to try it, just to see what you must not do.

humming right now will help you develop that finer deeper voice quality which you so greatly need.

Once you have established the habit of speaking in the lower tone, watch yourself continually to determine just which pitch is best for you. Then establish your voice in it.

Meantime, you have found that the effort involved in changing your tone has helped induce greater flexibility and ease and resonance. Thus you win on all three counts.

* *Make correct speech in a good voice your daily habit, but do not neglect to check up even on the good habit.*

Correct speech habits, like all good habits, need frequent attention for bad mannerisms creep in if vigilance is relaxed. Give yourself frequent check up and evaluation exercises.

MAKE A RECORDING

At least once a month, during your training period make a voice recording so that you can study your voice, and criticize your own performance. Even when you have become well established as a good speaker make a recording every three months, so as to check up on your performance.

Compare these later recordings with the one you made at the start. This comparison will help you to estimate your progress and show you where to place new emphasis for improvement. Listen to your own voice as often as possible, and be your own critic.

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* Tone quality speed pauses, emphasis, force — all these help to produce vocal variety

Voice variety is secured through changes in quality, rate of speed pauses, emphasis and force. You are not likely to take the trouble to analyze all these elements and work on them *separately* so we may perhaps do well just to consider one simple rule for avoiding monotony That rule is Get the meaning of what you say clearly in mind, and then speak so that the meaning will be made clear to those who listen.

Try speaking aloud the two sentences which follow

1 Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal

2. A sense of humor keen enough to show a man his own absurdities should keep him from the commission of all sins, or nearly all save those which are not worth com mitting

You cannot speak them alike, unless you force yourself to disregard their meaning Your voice naturally takes on certain tones, certain points of stress, as indicated by the sense. There are instinctive pauses. Even your rate of speed is affected by the words and their meaning

The first sentence, from the immortal ad dress at Gettysburg requires a slower rate

Keep on trying your voice on different uses. Make it show pleasure, surprise, anger, decision and other emotional reactions.

than the second one, quoted from a less familiar writing of Samuel Butler. Similarly there are natural differences in pitch and emphasis. That is true of almost every sentence you speak. The sense sets the measure for modulations and inflections. Failure to grasp the meaning leads to amusing errors and misinterpretations.

Try a few sentences, spoken aloud, to see what your voice is capable of doing. Make your emphasis and your changes of rate and pitch fit the meaning of the words.

1. *What's the matter with this fellow? Why he's drunk! Drunk — and at this early hour! What will he be by midnight!*
2. *I may be right. I may be wrong. But there are the facts as I see them. That is my story and I propose to stand by it.*

Make the inflections follow the meaning. Give them expression which will most clearly carry their meaning. Changing inflections can completely change the sense.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Speech With Intelligence

Eloquence is the art of saying things in such a way that those to whom we speak may listen with pleasure.

—PASCAL

The schoolboy type of recitation is an ex ample of what can be done to words when they are uttered with no sense of the meaning but with urgent haste to be done with an un pleasant task. The memorized speech tends to take on a similar artificial quality even when given by an experienced speaker

When the speaker loses the keen sense of importance of what he is saying the audience misses it also

* *Better not speak until you know what you mean by what you say*

How are you going to develop the habits which will give variety to your speech, and keep it out of the ruts of monotony?

Learn to think of what you are saying and to say it with impressive intonation

A simple method is to take some short sentence and work on it to see how many vari ations in meaning you can give it by means of changed emphasis and inflection.

I think my voice is all right "

Start by emphasizing the first word. Next, apply stress to the second word. Successively

emphasize the third, the fourth, and the fifth words, and then combine the last two words for your final effort. You will observe the wide variety in meaning which results from the shifting of the emphasis.

"What have we here?"

Apply the same method to this sentence, placing stress on the several words. Then try to say it pleasantly with the sense of surprise, and again with the sense of vexation and anger

We keep on repeating these admonitions because they are important.

Imagine a teacher finding on the desk a bunch of flowers, or some other pleasant surprise. Imagine the same teacher entering a room where pupils are in confusion and disorder The same words, spoken on these two occasions, will take on entirely different meanings, by reason of the manner of speaking

Make up sentences of your own, and see how many changes of meaning you can give them by changing emphasis and inflection. But don t overdo it.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Don't speak too rapidly It is hard on the audience and on the speaker as well. Some speakers, notably radio commentators, have cultivated the machine-gun style, until they could speak twice as many words per minute as most of us use. My own reaction to them has

not been too enthusiastic. They are all right for a novelty but grow tiresome in a little while.

Even the rate of your speech must be controlled. Give your hearers time to catch up with your thoughts.

The audience needs a chance to catch up with the thought of the speaker It needs the contrast of momentary silence with the blasting of the voice.

In public speech the rate is normally a little slower than in conversation Pauses are more essential.

Each speaker has his own normal rate of utterance and if he will determine this by timing himself he will be in a better position to judge the content of his speech on the basis of time allowed

In public speech, one may speak effectively from 100 to 180 words a minute. When carried away by the oratorical inspiration one may step the rate up temporarily to 160 words a minute, or even more, and again for oratorical effect, it may be reduced to a considerably slower speed, but both expedients should be used cautiously

Figuring your speech at the rate of 125 words a minute, you can readily see that in a five-minute talk, you will use about 600 words, a little more than the content of two pages of this book. This knowledge will help when you have a speech assignment with a definite time limit. Please do not undertake to slow down

Free flowing, even speech is fundamental. There are times when it'll be anything but even, when rhetorical effect calls for roughness, abruptness, even harshness. But keep it under control.

your rate, supposing it is too rapid, by hesitation, or meaningless pauses, or by drawling and dragging the words. Fluency is vital. The words must flow freely and the speaker must always keep them under control.

Go back to page 88 and read again the words from Lincoln's address at Gettysburg, varying the tempo, introducing pauses at different points, and shifting the emphasis. Note the differences in effect and even in meaning as you change the delivery.

Now take this other, less familiar passage from Lincoln, and study it as to meaning, and then reflect the meaning in your way of speaking it.

> *The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people just now are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty, but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different but incompatible things, called by the same name — liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties called by two different and incompatible names — liberty and tyranny.*

Just a few small changes in your reading will take all the life out of this paragraph. Quite as

not been too enthusiastic. They are all right for a novelty, but grow tiresome in a little while.

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You have discovered certain desirable quali ties in your own voice, and some not so desir able. Try to encourage and develop the good ones, and in so far as possible, suppress and eliminate the bad ones.

The way to improve is to keep at it. Be your own severest critic.

You have — I hope — made a few voice recordings. By this means you have learned how your voice sounds to other people. Review these recordings frequently always watching to see where you did not do well, and seeking ways to correct faults. By making records at inter vals of a few weeks or months, you can trace your progress, noting faults corrected and good points developed. But do not fail to watch for new faults which creep in.

Even while you are eliminating one undesirable trait, you may be admitting two or three others. Catch them before they become fixed habits, and get rid of them. Perfection is something you will never reach, but it is something for which you must always be reaching

You have developed some points of difference with me. I am glad of that, for if you disagree, you will be forced to think in order to decide whether you are right and I am wrong or the opposite. It would be a pity if we went together all this way without any difference of opinion.

Debate the differences honestly and clearly with yourself If you are convinced that I am

effectively some other changes will make it *living impressive, convincing* And the second type of delivery is the type which a speaker must use if he is to avoid monotony and misunderstanding

** Understand what you say Make your hearers understand what you mean.*

There is much which could be said about change of pace, and timing and emphasis and voice inflection, pitch and force. I believe that you can develop these desirable qualities of speech for yourself if you will adopt the one fundamental rule of understanding what you *say* and *speaking so as to make your hearers* understand.

Voice modulations come from within. If you are *in earnest, keenly concerned with what you* say eager to interpret it correctly to others, your speech will reflect your feelings. If your mind is dull if you are not interested, if you are mentally sluggish, your voice will put the audience to sleep and neither you nor they need be disturbed.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

If you have come this far with me, certain things have happened to you

You have tried many voice exercises and experiments. Some of them have appealed to you as being worth while to you. Let me urge you to hold on to them and continue to use them

might remark, "I wonder if you have ever had vocal instruction. Your voice sounds as though you should be a singer."

A friendly compliment does not cost you much, and it may do much good, if it is sincere and if it is deserved.

I have done this sort of thing on a few occasions when I have heard a particularly attractive voice, and it has been delightful to see the response. People like to be thus noticed and complimented, and when such comment has been offered, you may be sure that the recipient will become conscious and watchful of that talent you have mentioned. Thus you will have done a good turn, and possibly helped in some way to promote the cause of better voices — that epidemic which is so greatly needed in the world today.

wrong don t take my advice, but be sure that you are right before you go off on some tangent.

What we are after is to help you develop a good voice — your best voice — so that you may speak well and so that others may listen to you with pleasure and profit.

There must be a plan. Adopt the best one you can find and work with it.

Adopt a plan, whether my plan or some other by which you can achieve that good, pleasant, well-modulated, resonant, vital quali ty of voice which everyone should possess and then follow that plan for a good voice is developed and retained only by constant pratice criticism and correction

BE VOICE CONSCIOUS

One other word of counsel Practice the habit of "voice consciousness. Listen to the voices of other people and evaluate them as to *the quality of their speech. Apply to them the* standards which you have adopted for your self and then criticize yourself in turn by what you find in them

Some day you will be waited on in a store or office by some man or woman whose voice will appeal to you as unusually good Mention it, if you get a chance. The other will not be offended

You can say 'Has anyone ever told you that you have an unusually pleasant voice?' Or you

A three-way reaction.

Your voice, your face and your disposition react upon each other. They are mutually influential. Each helps or hurts the other. Our principle of relaxation is helpful to all three.

We have seen, in preceding chapters, how tension produces harsh, strained, unpleasant tones in the voice. Tension affects the face similarly, and tension in either voice or face reflects itself in the other.

Prove it. Speak some unpleasant words. For example, say "I hate that miserable fellow!" A look in the mirror will show that the vocal snarl is reflected in your face.

Change the mood and say "Oh, what a beautiful morning! I am glad to be alive today!"

You look better and sound better when you feel better, too.

The pleasant words help to relax both voice and face. You feel better, sound better and look better. And because you feel better, perhaps you are better, for the pleasant expression can reach back into your inmost being.

It has not been my purpose in this book to enter the field of therapeutics, nor of cosmetology, nor even of psychology, but it would not be fair to refrain from reminding you that the prescription for improving your voice can help also to improve your looks and your disposition. And that improvement will lead to better things in your dealings with other people.

A frown on your face puts a snarl into your voice. The frowning face and the snarling voice

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Your Public Relations Department

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

—MATTHEW 12.34

It is important for you to establish good 'public relations' — that is, a good standing with the people about you

Your voice and your face are your 'public relations" agents. More than any other factors, they serve to establish your status, to impress people, to give them ideas about you.

What other people think of you is largely determined by how you talk and how you look. That is reasonable, for your face and your speech are the interpreters of your mind. They reveal your character — your real self — as nothing else can do

** Voice improvement starts in your thinking.*

Thus it comes about that the best starting point for voice improvement is in your own mind. A fine friendly genial disposition mani fests itself in voice and face So does a mean grouchy selfish anti-social disposition You can t help giving yourself away

But here is an encouraging fact for you It can be cheering or startling just as it happens to hit you. Let us hope it cheers you even while it startles you

react on your disposition, and help to produce an unpleasant complex in your mind. This en courages further frowning and snarling until in the course of time your mental attitude becomes warped misanthropic, cynical, quarrel some The wrinkles become deeply engraved in your face, and the harsh notes are integrated into your voice. Happily the converse is true.

* *The genial, friendly gener ous disposition shows itself in voice and face.*

The smile, the genial friendly generous sentiment, whether it starts in voice, face or disposition, reacts on the other elements and tends to induce a positive, constructive, pleasant complex which makes your attitude and your appearance attractive and pleasing

With this conception of the matter *The Voice of the Speaker* takes on new meaning for you. Voice improvement is essential in personal improvement on all lines. Your "best voice can help to bring out your best self

* *Make your influence count for good.*

Nature has given you a priceless gift in your voice. It is the means by which you can com municate with your fellow men. It makes possi ble not only communication, but understanding and *fellowship Take advantage of every sug* gestion which will help you to improve it and make it more useful for by your voice and your words, your influence is made effective for *good or evil,* by all those whom your life may touch.

THE END